

ANNOUNCING
Privacy-Related Rules Changes
U.S. BANKRUPTCY COURT

Effective December 1, 2003

At its September 2002 session, the Judicial Conference approved proposed amendments to the Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure and the Official Forms which will implement the Conference policy on privacy and public access to electronic case files. Barring Congressional action, these amendments will take effect December 1, 2003.

This policy states that documents generally should be available electronically with the proviso that the Bankruptcy Code and Rules should be amended to allow the court to collect a debtor's full Social Security number but display only the last four digits. Key changes include the following:

- The petition, Official Form 1, will contain only the last four digits of individual debtor's Social Security numbers.
- Amendments to Rule 1007 will require debtors to *submit* a verified statement containing the full nine-digit number.
- The new Statement of Social Security Number will not be *filed* in the case or become part of the case file available to the public at the court or over the internet.
- Rule 2002 will be amended to require the clerk to include the debtor's full Social Security number (SSN) in the copy of the section 341 meeting of creditors notice, Official Form 9, sent to creditors, the debtor, the trustee, and the U.S. Trustee. The copy of the section 341 notice included in the court's case file, however, will contain only the last four digits of the SSN.
- Official Form 10, Proof of Claim, will require a wage creditor to disclose only the last four digits of the creditor's SSN.
- Official Form 16A, the Full Caption, will be amended to include only the last four digits of any debtor's SSN. Accordingly, subsequent notices (after the section 341 notice) will either include the last four digits or none, if Official form 16B, the Short Title Caption, is used.
- Filers—not the clerk—are responsible for redacting Social Security numbers and other personal identifiers such as dates of birth, financial account numbers, and names of minor children.